

# **LOOKING TO SUNDAY®**

**Sunday, February 26, 2017**

## ***The Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time***

This email, entitled Looking to Sunday®, focuses on one or more of the scripture readings for the coming Sunday. It prepares readers to hear God's Word at Mass and it offers a point of reflection to consider in the days leading to Sunday. Looking to Sunday is written by Father Tom Iwanowski.

### **WORRY & WARNING**

"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear.... Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.... Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them.... So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?'"

Those words from this Sunday's Gospel (Matthew 6:24-34) might bring to mind the popular song from the late 1980s, "Don't Worry, Be Happy," by Bobby McFerrin. The song tells us that no matter our circumstances of life we are not to worry or be concerned.

But those words of Jesus are certainly not the ones that insurance agents quote to prospective consumers when they are trying to sell them life, health, or property insurance.

They are not the words that parents tell their children as they begin to choose a college major or look for a job.

They are not the words that a missionary preaches to a congregation of starving, poverty stricken people.

And they are not the words by which most of us live our lives. We worry about our material needs and we work at our jobs to provide for ourselves and our families. We do not just sit back and wait for God to feed, clothe, and shelter us.

To appreciate Sunday's Gospel, we need to realize that Jesus is not telling us to be unconcerned about our material needs. If that were the case, why would Saint Paul have criticized those Christians in Thessalonica who had given up working as they waited for the Lord to return in glory. "We instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat." (2 Thessalonians 3:10) Furthermore in the Book of Genesis, God told Adam the same thing. "By the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread." (Genesis 3:19)

In the Gospel, Jesus is telling us to keep our need for the necessities of life in a proper perspective. Yes, we are to work for what we need to live, but above all we are to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

We are to live according to God's will. As we pray so often in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done." We are not to let an inordinate, excessive desire for more money, more possessions, more property, and ever more material goods become the force that directs our lives and sets our priorities. As Jesus tells us, "You cannot serve God and mammon."

This Sunday's Gospel is not meant to tell Christians to be unconcerned about what they need to care for themselves and their families. It is meant to warn us that the more we have, the greater the danger that what we possess will possess us. It may even become the "god" that we worship, the "god" we worry about most of all.

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